Session 7

History of Ethnographic Film
“Genealogy” of Ethnographic Film

“The Humanistic Family”

- CURTIS
- MARSHALL
- BALIKCI
- FLAHERTY
- ROUCH
- GARDNER
- MACDOUGALL

(a) Intensive immersion
(b) The presentation of a drama focusing on a specific individual
(c) Native feedback
(d) Visual suspense
In the Footsteps of Flaherty
→ *The Hunters* (1958)
→ *Dead Birds* (1964)

→ *The Netsilik Eskimo Project*

“The Scientific Family”
Reignault, cross-cultural study of movement

Bateson and Mead, *Bathing Babies in Three Cultures*
Typology of Ethnographic Films

Ethnographic fiction films, explorer films

Educational-film → anthropological teaching film

Commercial film ventures with an ethnographic base

Social documentary films
→ Dziga Vertov, Kino-pravda
→ showing ordinary people in their everyday surroundings
  → cinema vérité
  → shared anthropology

Ethno-art film?
→ Forest of Bliss
Deconstruction of Primitivism and Exoticism

- *Cannibal Tours*, 1988, Dennis O’Rourke
- *Incidents of Travel in Chichén Itzá*, 1997, Quetzil Castañeda & Jeffrey Himpele

Ethnographic Film vs. Anthropology?

1. early 1900s: rely less on visual technologies
2. shift from the evolutionism of 19th century—questioning of anthropometry
3. self-consciousness as a “serious scientific discipline”
4. “Retreat from the world”
5. emphasis on the intangibles of social structure
6. perceived loss of “primitive society”

→ angst of anthropological self-definition and disciplinary self-protection